Post 10-16-74

GSA Queried On Building By Montoya

Sen. Joseph M. Montoya (D-N.M.) said yesterday he would hold hearings on the federal government's acquisition this year of a massive building 10 miles north of former President Richard M. Nixon's San Clemente home unless the General Services Administration can provide satisfactory answers to questions he has concerning the $27 million transaction.

Montaya, chairman of the Appropriations Committee's Subcommittee on Treasury, Postal Service, and General Government Subcommittee, asked GSA Administrator Arthur F. Sampson to give him answers to the questions by Wednesday.

Referring to a story in The Washington Post this week disclosing that GSA acquired the building in Laquna Niguel, Calif., so that Mr. Nixon's records could be stored near his home, Montoya wrote to Sampson, "The subcommittee is informed that the U.S. taxpayers have given up $27 million in otherwise productive government property for this facility that the Office of Management and Budget has called a 'white elephant.'"

The taxpayers could wind up paying another $18 million for this "new world pyramid," Montoya wrote.

Montoya said he wanted to know how GSA expected to "fully utilize this great amount of space" whether GSA expected when it purchased it to house Mr. Nixon's records in the facility, how many years it might take GSA to find occupants to fully use the building, and how much it costs the government to maintain and operate the building while it stands empty.